

# The Inquirer

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## NO!

THE problem of providing a ministry is not confined to Unitarian churches. In fact these are standing up to it as well as most religious bodies. It is a problem for all Protestant churches, perhaps everywhere.

Whether it is one for the Catholic Church there are no public means of knowing. But most certainly the place of that church in modern society is very different from at the beginning of the century. Its social and ecclesiastical power has, to say the least, considerably diminished.

Dr. Mervyn Stockwood, the Bishop of Southwark, recently gave some startling figures about the decline and prospects of the ministry of the Church of England. We have checked them from official sources. At the beginning of the century there were 20,000 clergymen actively engaged. Today there are only 14,000, in spite of the increase of population, and half of these are in their sixties. According to the calculations of Dr. Stockwood, at least another 6,000 clergymen are wanted in the Church of England, but even if they were forthcoming there is no money to pay them. This, in what must be the best endowed, the best financially managed, and the most popular of the churches in the country.

### The Protestant Minister

This is taking place in a nation fantastically wealthy compared with the beginning of the century; and to the national church. The facade is kept up that all is as it was in the past; public requests can be made in a solemn manner and repeated by the B.B.C. for prayers in churches and chapels of thanksgiving for the birth of the new prince; but there is no hint that such requests are made to half the number of clergymen and ministers as were active in the country sixty years ago.

The social position of the Protestant minister has enormously changed. And his position in relation to religious faith has consequently changed also. In the past he could absorb the general social virtues, emphasise them, attempt to lift them to new levels of action and infuse them with the strength of religious belief. He was one among many, and in many ways a leading one.

### The Many Rejected Man

Today he is not one among many, for the many reject him. He is forced by virtue of the social position allotted to him to be alone. Society doesn't want him. Presumably a few million christenings, marriages and funerals still take place in the national church every year. Compared

with the wealth collectively owned by all these people the sum to provide for 6,000 new clergymen is infinitesimal. It is not forthcoming; and the "fees" paid for these events would probably be regarded as an insult if offered as tips to a head waiter.

The clergyman today, by virtue of the office he accepts, rejects the standards of the many as he never did in the past. More and more he goes his own lonely way. This is a new situation; it is one in relation to faith; and it is faced by a young Unitarian minister in an article on the next page of this issue.

He uses a new language, and offers a new penetration into the dedicated life in modern society.

### The Modern Tyranny

A new all-pervading authority exists today that in the name of the religious spirit has to be challenged. It is the authority of social value. According to this, that is right and secure which is done, and believed in, by the social mass. If the social mass has no use for religion that is right; and if a person doesn't wish to be regarded as odd, or to enter into the comparative insecurity of living outside what is believed as right, then he does not bother with religion.

This authority like most modern tyrannies has its virtues. Under every conceivable form of political organisation in every country it cares for the aged, the weak and the young as never before. And good citizens, under this authority, are not expected to rock the boat. In this country, in times of social tension, they use "common sense", elsewhere they are expected to use "common sense" before the tensions arise, or else. But why the aged, weak and young should be cared for no one knows except that vaguely the authority—that is the social mass—expects it. The difference for instance between caring for the aged out of dignity and honour for service accomplished, and out of vague good-will, is rarely thought about.

Like most forms of authority this one has its lie. It is the lie of the "must". It is constantly telling itself, without any effective challenge within itself, that the means of its own destruction must be created. It does not really will what it wills, or believe what it believes, but it speaks its wealth and organises its society, everywhere, with the intention to destroy itself. Helplessly like slaves it goes about this "must", believing the lie as slaves in the past believed the lie that they were not really men.

This falsehood is triumphant everywhere. And it is doubtful if any tyranny in the past ever exercised such world-wide power as this. This social mass is triumphant. Every form of organisation is in its power. And daily it carries the burden, imposed by itself, of believing what is not true.

The following article says "No" to the new tyranny. It justifies the action of the lonely creative spirit. It spells out religion in new sacrificial terms.

## SEPARATENESS IN TOGETHERNESS

By Dietmar Meyer-Klugel  
(Minister, Ilminster and Yeovil)

THE need for balance between John Donne's "No man is an Island", and Buddha's, "Let each man be unto himself an Island", is the theme of Colin Wilson's latest book, *The Age of Defeat*.

He supports several American sociologists who express concern about the increasing emphasis on social virtues. In their view the awakening of the social consciousness is in danger of becoming too successful. They make a plea for more individualism.

William H. Whyte, who made a study of the extent of conformity in the *Organisation Man*, does not make a plea for non-conformity *per se*. He recognises the value of co-operation in society, but is critical of the trend towards more and more powerful organisations killing enterprise, creative thought and self-reliance in their employees. For example he criticises the increasing emphasis on team-work and organisation in scientific research. Discovery, he says, has an accidental quality, the creative worker needs maximum freedom. The outstanding scientist works in an organisation, not *for* it. He does not ask for companionship or belongingness, he just asks for freedom to do what he wants to do.

David Reisman, of Harvard, distinguishes between the inner-directed man, the pioneer, whose self-discipline enables him to forge ahead towards his chosen goal amid the confusions of a changing society, and the other-directed man, who demands security, whose desires and ambitions are dependent on society.

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Colin Wilson applies the analysis of Reisman and Whyte in his study of modern trends in literature. He speaks of the all-dominating cult of the "ordinary chap" that has for many years pervaded English as well as American literature. He argues that other-direction has become a basic attitude in modern culture.

There are novels and plays in which society, or an organisation is represented as the hero. In Herman Wouk's *Caine Mutiny* a neurotic and over-bearing captain loses his nerve in a storm. His first officer relieves him of his command on "medical grounds" and saves the ship. In a court-martial the officer's action is found to be justified, but his lawyer afterwards tells him that morally he was wrong in opposing his superior. The moral implied in the story is that the risk of losing the ship was preferable to revolt against authority. If authority can be vindicated even in these circumstances, it is absolute in ordinary situations. The villain of the piece is the intellectual who by his questioning of things urged the officer to rebel. In *Vol de Nuit*, by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry the efficiency of the organisation has become the authority, with the result that the crew of an aircraft on a night-flight in South America lose their lives in a hurricane.

In other novels the individual is crushed and defeated by society. An atmosphere of futility and defeat pervades such plays as *A Streetcar named Desire*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, by Tennessee Williams, or the *Hairy Ape* by Eugene O'Neill.

When the individual is not defeated, he takes his place quietly in society. The trend towards other-direction is reflected in popular radio and television programmes, particularly domestic serials. As Colin Wilson says, they proclaim, "You may be ordinary, but you're better off that way! The every day life of the audience is taken as the norm. The good characters are those of ordinary life on a level of conscientious triviality". He points out the contrast of this to the popular literature of Richardson, Byron and even Victorian melodrama, which invited the reader to identify himself with a hero who could escape from a difficult situation only by strength of character.

Colin Wilson argues that the recent revolt against the trend of other-direction, by the "Beat Generation" in America, or the "Angry Young Men" in England does not, in the main, constitute a constructive alternative—"it lacks direction. It tends to be a wild thrashing around that demonstrates nothing but dissatisfaction. Moreover, their involvement in the cult of the ordinary chap shows that they are very far from extricating themselves from the premises they believe they are attacking".

Neither Reisman nor Whyte offered a solution to the problem of the conflict between the individual and society. As William Whyte states, the dividing line between the community as a friend and as a tyrant is a very narrow one indeed. A person living in a strongly social environment will not lack for support and encouragement in time of personal trouble, and a measure of conformity and willingness to sacrifice certain personal whims may seem a small enough price to pay for preservation of harmony in the group. Individualism as unrestrained self-interest will not produce a greater good than the social ethic.

On the other hand society as such has no dynamic, it can be an obstacle to individual initiative and imagination. The individual is the hostage of prevailing opinion. Society encourages behaviour of a normal pattern. But what is normal? Human beings are different. They vary in temperament, have their idiosyncracies, why should they all have to rival each other in their efforts to hide their differences and live up to a normal standard? The English social historian Hobhouse said, "Society consists of human beings, each of them a centre of mental activity, of thoughts and feelings, passions, desires, joys, and sorrows . . . each individual touches society at his own distinctive point, never quite the same as anyone else. He brings his own individual nature, never cut with precision to a universal pattern, to bear on social life. Roughly he fits in with the rest or may be brought to do so by a little pressure. But the fit is not exact, and there is always a danger that the pressure may distort and ruin. Individuality has its value and the society, which does not recognise it is in danger of stagnation".

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Society has little sympathy for the man who withdraws and keeps his soul free for vision, in which it has no share. True, examples of spiritual pride and self-sufficiency are numerous, but for a man to be a pioneer he must repudiate the feeling of insignificance, he must refuse to be dragged down to the level of ordinariness, but he give offence to his fellow-men! It depends on his integrity whether he will return from his moments of inner-directedness to the suffering, if unheeding mass of humanity, in the hope that perhaps his message may now and again cause someone to lift his head a little nearer to the stars, to contemplate creation, and wonder at the meaning of it all.

A creative artist who looks beyond the facade of the commonplace everyday things gives expression to something within him that is part of a greater life. But this inner-directedness is not self-sufficiency. The artist's work is absorbed by other minds, by other hearts, it encourages or influences this person or that person. What people are made reacts on their environment.

Paul Brunton wrote that the person who practices inner-directedness "can become a discriminator of the true light, can change himself and thus become fit to change others. It is to such men, inspired selfless instruments, ready to work in the higher services of mankind, that we must look for the liberation of the world from its legacy of spiritual ignorance and material suffering".

## "SECONDARY MODERNS"

### A REPLY

By H. A. Whidam

(Miss Whidam is a retired headmistress of a secondary modern school)

**T**HANKS are due to Kathleen Tootill (*Inquirer*, Feb. 20th) for her concise and truthful summing up in her second sentence, of staffing, work, and attitudes found in our modern secondary schools.

The sweeping statements—so sweeping as to be untrue—of the front-page article of January 30th, do a grave injustice to the many skilful, experienced, and enlightened members of modern secondary school staffs throughout the country. No-one in the land deplores the low taste and standard of morals in rubbish published for the immature of all ages more than do these "dedicated people". They spend their lives in a daily fight against the deadly influence of the cartoon-strip, horror comics, cheap, "unreal romance" magazines, and "sex-violence in fiction".

They do not pursue a course of teaching that "really fits" the scholars to appreciate and hunger for this "unreal romance", or for "sex-plus-violence". It seems likely to surprise at least one member of the public that some of their weapons are "the priceless treasures of the world's literary heritage", which, it was stated, "it is quite unusual for any of them (secondary modern scholars) to be able to read, assimilate and enjoy" in their original form. In addition, it should also be widely known that these same "priceless treasures" are still used deliberately as a basis for much discursive moral training in the schools.

In the Library



By courtesy of the Northampton Education Committee

There is plenty of available factual evidence that ability to read a good book in the manner described is by no means unusual whether as a class reader with guidance and discussion, or as an individual library book read at home; nor is this ability confined to scholars of satisfactory academic attainment, even in schools unsuited for external examination courses. It is likely that the number and quality of titles for regular class reading over a four year period, even in an "average" modern school, would surprise members of the reading public.

The well-known classics provide excellent material still, for older scholars, supplemented by the children's classics and modern books of known literary worth, used regularly week by week for four years. In addition to this work (in at least one known school) is the study (followed by visits to theatre) of Shakespeare plays, with also the experience of an annual festival for verse speaking within the school—the contrasts comprising more than a hundred scholars speaking our national lyrics and narrative verse—and the constant enjoyment of songs of impeccable worth.

Secondary modern schools develop their own lines of special interest. A perusal of almost any number of *The Times Educational Supplement* will show the discerning reader how varied these are, and how much good teaching obviously goes on day by day—generally "unlettered and unsung"! The causes of the rot deplored lie not with the efforts of the schools, but elsewhere, and plainly so. The reading of rubbish published is not, either, necessarily confined to "secondary moderns"; a university-trained headmistress has stated that it can be found at grammar and even university level!

A writer in *John o'London's* correspondence column (January 31st) mentions the great expansion of library services for children both in and out of school, the discriminating tastes of children, and the certain opinion that there are more children today who appreciate good writing than at any time in the past. In this connection it is relevant to point out the valuable work of the School Library Association, whose office is near neighbour to that of *The Inquirer*, viz., at 29, Gordon Square. Since 1945, after the passing of the Fisher Act, the Association extended its activities to include aid for the secondary modern schools. Its efforts have been tireless, generous, and continuous, in advising inexperienced teacher-librarians, providing lecturers, book displays, book lists, encouraging the formation of local branches, organising branch areas, and so on. So well has the work advanced, that the present main emphasis is transferred to the needs of junior schools, where already results are clearly visible.

Meetings, whether in London, country towns or rural areas, are marked by free and friendly exchange of information and advice; close co-operation between public and library staffs and teacher-librarians, and eagerness of approach by teachers at all stages of the work. In the main, local authorities are sympathetic and co-operative; interest from an informed public would now be welcome.

It is easy to say that "the community gets the education it is willing to pay for". Neither as opinion nor fact is it relevant to the large amount of very fine work done in these schools for the average, and therefore major part, of our population.

"What can we do about it?" The field for action is large and all too obvious, but it does not include attack on the work of idealistic, skilful, experienced men and women, teachers-cum-social workers, who keep the school flag flying.

"Where do we begin?"—perhaps by cultivating the acquaintance of some strong secondary modern members of staff, and thereby learning the art of fair appraisal of their work and conditions. A further step could be to learn something of the schemes of work in schools generally, and of the planning of courses in every secondary school. The public is often unaware of this silent, exacting background study obligatory on staffs and headteachers.

## A LAYMAN'S DIARY

**FEBRUARY 17.** A doctor friend took me to hear the Galton Lecture at the Eugenic Society. Absorbing account, by Dr. Eliot Slater, of the "patron saint" of eugenics, Francis Galton (1822-1911), who devised the weather map, discovered and named the anticyclone, invented a teleprinter back in 1838, and pioneered in many other scientific fields. Sir Julian Huxley, who presided, said that Galton had even conducted a statistical investigation into the efficacy of prayer! I must try to unearth that, if it is still in print anywhere.

Later, we had our second look at the *Lifeline* medium, Douglas Johnson. Most of the science film was shown again, and then it was discussed by a professor of psychology, a statistician, and Chan Canasta, rather inconclusively on the whole (how could it be otherwise?). My own vote would be for a combination of some degree of telepathy (between living people only) and sincere intelligent gleaning by the medium. I wish the Rev. Herbert Cuddeback had been on the panel to give us the benefit of his common sense and wide experience in this field.

February 18. Spent the lunch-hour listening to the Church Assembly, which was talking about the care of church buildings, libraries and plate. The gallery at Church House, Westminster, is public, and the view and acoustics are excellent. One lay speaker said earnestly, "the parish church at Macclesfield is rich in recumbent effigies", and was quite bewildered by the loud laughter which ensued. The Dean of Gloucester gave the assembly expert advice on how to polish silver-gilt: plenty of elbow grease, but no plate powder, as that takes the gilt off. A lady member who asked what all this had to do with refugees was promptly suppressed, like the juror in *Alice* (not so forcibly, but just as effectively: no one took any notice of what she said). At the end (I forget why) the Archbishop of Canterbury gave the useful ruling that bishops were clergy, archdeacons were clergy, and clergy were inferior clergy. He appealed, rather light-heartedly, for someone to devise a synonym for "inferior" which would mean the same thing without sounding so derogatory. No one made the attempt.

The whole effect was very knowledgeable, genial, and "U": the laymen who spoke all looked like knights or colonels—and about half of them were.

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February 19. Got my Chalice badge at last. They are 1/6 each, from *Unitarian Information*, Essex Hall, Essex Street, London, W.C.2 (not from the Book Room).

In today's *Inquirer* Margaret Newby suggests that a feeling of "inferiority" is the root cause of anti-Semitism. I think this is right. In 1947-9 James H. Robb, a New Zealand sociologist, carried out a survey of anti-Jewish attitudes in Bethnal Green, and set out his conclusions in a readable book, *Working-Class Anti-Semitism* (Tavistock Publications, 1954). He found that those who expressed anti-Jewish feelings tended to be solitary, anxious, insecure people who regarded the world as a cold unfriendly place. One interesting discovery was that people who worked for Jewish employers, or with Jewish workmates, or lived in Jewish districts, were neither more nor less anti-Jewish than those who did not. The determining factor seemed to be the personality of the anti-Semite, not his actual experience of Jewish people.

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February 20. One dubious advantage of television is that one can sit by one's fireside and watch the scoring of the single penalty goal that puts one's chosen team out of the F.A. Cup competition. Not even the thought of jubilant faces tomorrow at Unity Church and Upper Chapel can make this an exhilarating experience.

However, one can't please everyone all the time: in the immortal words of Padraic O'Clairhew, the Sweet Tiger-Hunter of Crumlin:

Many things that worry  
The conscientious inhabitants of Dummery  
Evolve nothing but laughter  
In Larne and Kibboeghler;

And conduct regarded as far from shabby  
In Geyahbey  
May appear in Ballyhanna  
To be far worse than anything that goes on in the Kardin.

### Irish Name Trade

Sir: In your issue, dated 28/2/60, you print a letter from an E. Whitley complaining about what is known as the "Irish Name Scandal". I feel that too much notice is being taken about an affair we would never have heard about only for the fact of the story in the *Daily Mirror*. Why all this sudden outcry? H.E. Whitley came or came to look at the report of the N.S.P.C.C. for 1959, he will see that over four thousand cases of cruelty to children were brought before the courts and that were only the cases that were discovered. Are human names important to us then children in this country? No wonder we British are known as the "Nation of Animal Lovers". Sign a petition! Not me.

Manchester.

Yours, R.S. Dilly.

## THE TRAINING OF MINISTERS

By H. L. Short

EVERYONE concerned—student, teacher, denominational leader, man in the pew—wants the training of our ministers to be as good as it can be. Naturally there is much discussion about curriculum, methods and aims.

Sometimes it is asked whether there need be any academic training at all. Some men, perhaps, are natural ministers, and all the knowledge they need can be picked up from experience. In former days apprenticeship was the entry to almost every profession, and often the apprentice received very little direct instruction. But nowadays all jobs are specialised, and there is a great deal to learn. The inspired amateur can be a danger. In a world where so many people have advanced education, the minister must also be a trained man; and not merely in technique, but also in fundamentals. Since he will spend much time in preaching and teaching, a minister's general level of knowledge also should be high. Unitarians, who stress reason as a guiding principle, should demand a highly-disciplined reason in their ministers.

In former times ministerial training was easier to plan, because the ground to be covered was definite and limited. The minister was trained in classics, mathematics and theology, to which the 18th century added history, belles lettres and natural science. But there is no end to the subjects which can be added, as the field of human knowledge widens. The modern world also has learnt that knowledge is not just abstract learning; behind every human relationship there is a great field for disciplined enquiry—hence the rise of psychology and the social sciences. Science has become a vast interlocking world of abstract theory and technique, into which the ordinary man has little entry.

What of this can be studied in three years at a theological college, to enable a man to be an effective minister? Perhaps all that can be attempted is to acquire a little knowledge of the latest conclusions of scholars about the Bible and other subjects, plus an improved literary skill in preaching and an introduction to the techniques of welfare work; after that a minister must make himself, as he practices his ministry. Occasionally wider subjects are added, like sociology or comparative religion, as public interest in them rises. But men to be trained are often bewildered when they go out into the actual world.

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In American theological colleges, where much thought has been given to this matter, the whole course is often divided into five or six distinct "fields", e.g., the Bible, church history, philosophy, "religion", social ethics, pastoral work. The student is required to do at least an introductory course in each field, and then often "electives" in the field where he wants to do more advanced work, to build up a required number of hours of work per week; the whole must make a balanced and progressive programme. This is an excellent method; its chief danger is that the introductory courses may provide no more than a second-hand smattering of knowledge. They are often crowded by intensive lecturing, noted by "quizzes". The student may become merely the recipient of soon-forgotten information, rather than a thinker.

An alternative method, which is practised at Manchester College, Oxford, is to have a "core" course, round which other subjects of study are grouped. At Manchester College the core has two strands, the New Testament and Christian history, which are studied by progressive stages throughout the three years. One reason why these two were chosen is, of course, that these are the subjects on which the present staff can claim to have advanced knowledge, and can try to teach up to a scholarly standard. No teacher can be omnipotent, and it is important, for the teacher's own sake, that he should concentrate on what he feels he is specially equipped to do; and this extension for a subject well, it is hoped, communicates something more than information to the student. A subject so taught spills over into other fields, and raises fundamental issues of life and faith.

Round this core other subjects are grouped, each studied

for a term, and the whole organised on a progressive plan and a discussion method which, it is hoped, lead to some climax and maturity of judgment. The Principal's final course is entitled "Towards a Unitarian theology", and is intended as a goal towards which the three years have been directed. The student himself is expected to have developed mature views on this matter, and to be able to formulate and express them.

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Another important feature of the Manchester College method is its permissive elements. Teachers in their enthusiasm often think that the initiative comes from themselves, and that the student is merely waiting to be instructed. But real learning comes only from the student's desire to learn; you can take a horse to the water, but you cannot make him drink. This is especially true of theological students, who are going into an underpaid profession from a sense of vocation, and are often already graduates, who have got beyond the classroom stage of education. After the core requirements have been met, the college tries to enable each student to follow his own bent. The lecture-list at Oxford University is not closely tied to the degree-examinations, as is customary elsewhere; professors and lecturers offer courses which are complete in themselves. A student, for example, who wants to probe the latest developments in logical empiricism will find teachers who deal with this. Manchester College, whose own core lectures are in the official list of the faculty of theology, can usually get admission to such courses for qualified students. Work for a degree or diploma is encouraged, though not prescribed, provided that it does not conflict with college commitments. The Oxford diploma in theology, an examination in two or three basic subjects only, is very suitable for this, especially as the university leaves the method of preparation entirely to the student and his college.

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This permissiveness extends also to other parts of the college course. Optional classes are offered in theological and social subjects; students attend as they wish, and may drop out without comment if the class does not meet their need. This term the subjects were "Welfare of old people" and "Prayer in theory and practice". Every January also each student is asked to choose a topic for private research with a minimum of supervision, presenting a report in May. Some outstanding work has been done in this way. All this is intended to enable the student to feel that he is responsible for his own education, as a free man dedicated to a profession and a way of life. The curriculum is a framework, not a treadmill. Incidentally this method can produce scholars, i.e., men with a passion to enquire, self-disciplined in method and aim.

A further consideration which must be kept in mind is the possible change in the student himself during his three years at college. A student who enters college with idealism and a sense of vocation, though often rather glib in his ideas of what the ministerial life will demand of him, sometimes goes through a crisis of faith during his college course. Just because he is digging down to fundamentals he has to re-evaluate his attitude to them, and it may take time and involve stress. This is a battle a man must be allowed to fight for himself; authority can sometimes help, but cannot interfere. He needs the support of discipline and the opportunity of free development. If he comes through, he will be a better man and a better minister. In the right college atmosphere, he should come through safely.

### Women's League

The Annual Meeting of the Sheffield District Women's League was held in Upper Chapel, Sheffield, on February 2nd.

The reports read by Branch Secretaries were interesting and stimulating. Much work had been done, money raised and fellowship and friendship fostered in church and in the community around it.

The Annual Service was conducted by Mrs. Whitaker of Thoresby, President of the District and President Elect of the National Association. Mrs. Robinson of Rotherham was the Organist. J.W.

## THE G.A.—PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT

### Program Report

(Contributed by the Publicity Department of the General Assembly.)

**E**XPERIENCE gained in the growing work of the Department has brought about a significant change in regard to policy in the field of extension and development work.

When the Forward Movement began a few years ago, the general feeling was that the first priority was the maintenance and strengthening of existing causes rather than the establishment of new ones. By "Mission to Ourselves" we sought to improve the knowledge of Unitarianism amongst our own people. This kind of work is still needed, but a new situation has arisen. Side by side with the effort to maintain existing causes there must be a vigorous attempt to build up new groups. This change of outlook is forced upon us by a study of the enquiries which have reached the Department during the last year.

The addresses from which the various enquiries have come (today the Department has dealt with 1,800) are marked with a pin on a large scale map of the British Isles which hangs on the wall in the Information Office at Essex Hall. Observation of the density of the growing number of pins in certain areas on the map has shown that there are over 30 places in the country where there are a sufficient number of people interested in Unitarianism to justify study with a view to the formation of a group.

Local congregations have been supplied with the names and addresses of enquirers in their area. District Associations are to get their lists as soon as they can be prepared. It is hoped that in the light of this information churches and District Associations will make some attempt to assess the situation in their area and to bring together people who have shown interest in our way of thinking with the idea of forming groups.

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The London District Provincial Assembly for instance, is looking into the possibilities of launching groups in Worthing, Epsom and Tunbridge Wells. Their experience will be very valuable because the District Minister has already done considerable work in this field. Through the enthusiasm of a Unitarian layman who went to live in Welwyn Garden City, a meeting of interested Unitarians living in that area was called just over a year ago. A meeting place was found in a Girl Guide's hut, and regular monthly services are now established and a dozen to 16 people come together.

In Watford, another place in the L.D.P.A. area where a fellowship has been established for some years, not only is there regular worship, but a mid-monthly discussion meeting is held in the home of a member, and a Women's League meeting is held once a month. Although this fellowship has no home of its own—it meets in the Friends' Meeting House—it can truly be said that persistent efforts by local people, aided by ministers and lay people of the London District, have succeeded in creating a live congregation. These successes present a picture of hopefulness and promise and dispel for ever that pessimism which says that our Movement is declining.

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There are some among us who feel that rather than form a new group, with its own activities and troubles, newcomers should be encouraged to link up with the nearest existing church, even if it be several miles away. In theory this sounds sensible, but we have to consider that the new Unitarian may lack the incentive to take a deal of trouble to attend worship in a church. He has not decided to join a particular congregation but simply to support a way of thought and life. But will he travel a long distance? A meeting nearer to his own doorstep will be needed and welcomed by him. There he will find the friendship of newcomers like himself and the intimacy of worship which a small group can provide. Existing congregations, with the best intentions in the world, find it difficult to receive new people. The question which any one examines is whether a new possibility

friend is multiplied a hundredfold when an established body is approached by an individual. The newcomer must be very determined if he is to break down this resistance. But where he is coming together with newcomers like himself, and, apart from the leader perhaps, all have an equal footing, he can quickly make himself at home.

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Those who have but lately discovered the freedom of the Unitarian Movement will want to discuss, to study, to ask questions. This kind of activity succeeds best when only a small number are engaged, and in the informal atmosphere of someone's home. Greater frankness in discussion is possible, barriers of shyness and reserve are more easily broken down. Such small discussion groups, as they develop spiritually and intellectually within themselves, may indeed make a rich contribution towards achieving the pattern of the church which Elton Trueblood has described as "A place where love is encouraged to grow, by sheer learning to love one another and to be active in common caring".

We are now getting the reactions of the ministers who have received their lists of addresses. It will be very interesting to find out what happens when District Associations get to work. To expect quick results would be very wrong, but we shall see where life and energy is in our Movement and where it is lacking. The opportunity is here. By thinking again about the meaning of our congregational life and taking up a new attitude towards our own Movement it is possible for us to go on from strength to strength. The new attitude is summed up in those words "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them".

## Correspondence

Letters should be addressed to the Editor, "The Inquirer", 14 Gorden Square, London, W.C.1. They should not in general exceed three to four hundred words in length.

### The Sunday School

Sir: Reading the Reverend C. H. Bartlett's recent letter at first roused my surprise, then my indignation, and in the end my consideration. Somehow I feel now rather glad that I did not dispose of it either in amusement or disgust.

All things considered, and after many years' experience in Sunday School work, there is NOT, in my humble opinion, any known successful substitute for our Sunday Schools. Whilst they no longer need exist to gather vast numbers to the silent fold, teach sacred history, sing cheerful songs of praise, or even, to quote Mr. Bartlett, "to keep children out of their parents' way", they still remain the basic pattern toward a Fellowship of Christian understanding amongst those who are young.

The majority of parents (and Unitarian parents are no exception) are hopelessly indifferent as to whether or not their children attend Sunday School, and as the child grows to teenage he discovers so many other exciting alternative things to do with the "gang" from the street in which he lives, or the school, or youth club, he attends. At the same time, churches around him are failing to realise the importance of making it possible for these "gangs" and friendships to be formed in their name and under their auspices. Personal research into Sunday Schools I know, reveals the discouraging fact that less than 50% of the 11-14 age group have any activity in the name of Unitarianism outside the "one hour a week" Sunday session.

Is it any wonder that these young folk drift away? There are the exciting alternative possibilities, cycle rides into the country, trips to the seaside, afternoons in swimming pools, with boys and girls they meet every day. Why spend a dull afternoon in the company of people you only see once a week if you don't have to do so?

There is only one way by which the Sunday School, acting in its normal capacity as ambassador to the church, can hold present day youngsters, and that is by minutes, church officers and members of musical bands, etc. etc., being made to realise that we MUST, however costly the undertaking, find, or raise the money, which in addition to planning, time and energy, will make certain that our Sunday Schools are "week-day-a-week" training grounds in Christian citizenship; that they become in fact, "Christian Community Centres for Children".

Relegate, even by suggestion, our Sunday Schools to oblivion, and there is nothing more certain than that by 2,000 A.D. we shall have guaranteed another 50-70 decayed, decrepit and doddrum congregations.

Dulcified.

Yours, John A. Ratcliffe.

Sir: In our adult class we had a debate last Sunday on your letter headed "Sunday Schools". Being now a member of this class, after having been a teacher for 25 years, I had quite a lot to say about your letter. At the end of our class we decided to send you a letter. You ask: "Are Sunday Schools of any use apart from keeping children out of their parents' way on a Sunday afternoon?" Of course they are.

We in our Sunday School do not send our children to school, we take them, therefore we don't need to worry about them being in the way.

When they leave the Primary Department, they come into the Sunday School, and their parents are already there. When they are 16 they go into the adult class, and become church members also. If you start the right way, these children will be an asset to the church, and not leave you when they are 14 years of age.

You also say: "Is this effort worth while?" Once more we say, of course it is. If you admit that Sunday Schools have finished then they have, but if you put your best foot forward your Sunday School will be with you always. If you could decide that we should divert our energy, in new directions, more in keeping with our times, you will find out you are wasting your time and energy, because there is nothing more important than Sunday School work.

So Mr. Bartlett get your friends to take their children to Sunday School not send them, then your Sunday School, like ours, will be worth while.

Bry, Lancs.

Chesham Unitarians.

Sir: When the time comes for us to admit that Sunday Schools have finished their useful life and are out of date, there will no doubt be many churches and ministers who will realise that a church's strength very often lies in the Sunday School which, according to Mr. Bartlett, is supported by the church at such a great expense.

How long will it take us to realise that Sunday School work is merely a continuation of the work of the church; not a rather boring but necessary evil. How long will it be before some of our ministers realise that here in the Sunday School is a chance to practice what they preach?

A Sunday School can and should be self-supporting. A Sunday School can and should be organised and planned so as to provide opportunity for character building; so as to provide training in citizenship; an understanding of Unitarian thought and a measure of liberality in thought, not only in religion but in all things. Most important of all a Sunday School ought to be a matter of prime interest to every minister and church committee in the assembly. What does Mr. Bartlett consider to be most important—a sermon for the adults, or a service for the children?

Dulcified.

Yours, G. Horbury.

### Behind the Curtain

Sir: You state in your article from Prague (23.1.60): "This exhibition is a fine illustration of the fact that the People's Democracies are ready to welcome and acknowledge all those noble ideas and endeavours which help people at large to attain spiritual and social liberty".

This is as far from the facts as it is possible to get. Perhaps the following illustrations of the People's Democracies "liberation" may interest you: In Czechoslovakia, two archbishops and ten bishops are in prison. In Bulgaria, religious instruction is specifically forbidden in schools, though training in atheism is government-sponsored. In Hungary, youth who were no more than 15 at the time of the 1956 revolt are still being executed for the part they played in it. In Poland, a citizen who recently submitted a manuscript to a magazine without having it officially "checked" first, received three years for its content. In Rumania, which anyone possessing a passport could which permits of a man's family being used as leverage, a Party publication shows the full extent of their "freedom" when it points out the low political standard of Rumanian broadcasts. In East Germany, a decent head was recently found for playing too many Western games and not submitting in programme to the authorities. In the USSR, Jews have been arrested for denigrating the traditional feast "next year in Jerusalem".

But it is tedious to continue with this gloomy catalogue. I can only suggest that neither the "free" citizens behind the Iron Curtain nor those who languish in prisons and labour camps will agree with your definition of "real spiritual and social liberty".

Information Service of Free Czechoslovakia Yours, A. C. Alexander.



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#### Birth

Odgers.—On February 24th at the Guildford Clinic to Unity, wife of Norman Odgers, a daughter (Carolyn Ann Barbara).

#### Presentation to Minister

Norwich.—At the end of January the Octagon Guild entertained the congregation at a well-attended New Year party. A surprise item during the evening was the presentation to the minister, the Rev. J. A. Kennedy, of a cheque subscribed by the Chapel members to mark the completion of ten years' work at the Octagon. Making the presentation, Mr. R. H. Mottram, President of the congregation, referred to the fact that its origins went back precisely three centuries to the election of Dr. Collings from St. Stephen's Church at the Restoration. He pointed out that Mr. Kennedy's ministry was the longest at the Octagon for over a hundred years, and that during his leadership a complete and expensive scheme of restoration had been carried out on the Chapel. Both the minister and Mrs. Kennedy (who was presented with a bouquet of flowers) thanked the congregation for its generosity, its unflinching support, and many evidences of kindness, and looked forward to further work and fellowship in the cause they shared.

#### FROM LEWINS MEAD TO ESSEX HALL

##### A Play to Help Refugees

Inter-Church Aid and Refugee Service is an executive department of the British Council of Churches, which is itself an integral part of the World Council of Churches. For World Refugee Year Great Britain has a target of £4,000,000 towards a world effort to clear up the hopeless suffering of refugees. Inter-Church Aid is pledged to raise one quarter of this total, namely £1,000,000. Church people of all denominations are working together.

With the object of drawing attention to this work the Director, Miss Janet Lacey, has written a play called "By the Waters of Babylon", which tells the plight of refugees with the trials of everyday people. This was presented at Bristol by the Lewins Mead Theatre Club with such a depth of religious feeling and such sincerity, that the audience remained completely silent after the final dramatic moment. The members of the Lewins Mead Church and their friends were profoundly moved. One of them, determined that this play and the performance of it should have a wider audience offered to pay the considerable cost of transport to London. The party to be transported, fed and housed overnight, including technicians, members

## THE CONWAY MEMORIAL LECTURE

Mrs. Mary Stacks, B.Sc., will deliver 1960 Conway Memorial Lecture, "Youth in An Affluent Society" Tues. March 15, 7.30 p.m. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn Station. R. W. Sorrensen, M.P., Chairman.

Admission free

Public cordially invited.

#### Holiday Accommodation

BREAKFAST IN BED is a free service at Normanhurst now. Other free "extras" include heated bedrooms, coffee after main meals, early tea, fresh fruit daily and above all no gratuity (exchange included in quoted price). A few rooms still available. Prices from 6d. guests inclusive. Also looking for summer. Write at once for illustrated brochure and coloured town booklet. NORMANHURST, Sea-front, St. Leonards, Sussex. Seaboard, facing full south, premier position. Phone Hastings 4794.

Accommodation at Holland Park Youth Hostel, by kind permission of the London Health Management Committee, has been paid for by a lady of Essex Church, and Kensington trustees are helping the Essex Church ladies to provide meals in the Church Hall. The cost of modest publicity is all covered.

The play will be given on Saturday, March 12th, at 8 p.m. at Essex Church Hall (across down the steps) in Palace Gardens Terrace, Notting Hill Gate. The honoured guest will be Miss Janet Lacey, who will introduce her own play. On the Sunday, March 13th, there will be a performance at St. Columba in Port Street at 7.30 p.m., when Lady Ravensdale will make an appeal, having been introduced by the Mayor of Chelsea. There will be no charge for admission to either performance. Silver collections will be devoted entirely to the work of Inter-Church Aid.

Essex Church Hall will hold about a hundred, and St. Columba Church Hall about five hundred, so the attraction of at least 600 will have been drawn to the importance and urgency of this conflict work.